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# Utah Watershed Review

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## National CAFO Rule Passed

When EPA and USDA announced their comprehensive water quality rule for dealing with livestock feeding operations in December, Utah water quality and agriculture officials were smiling because they knew Utah is well on its way to meeting federal requirements and well ahead of other states.

"Our Utah livestock producers have been exemplary in leading these changes nationally," said Utah Commissioner of Agriculture, Cary G. Peterson. "Our goal is to reduce water pollution while sustaining a viable livestock industry. We are well positioned to do this."

The national rule was announced Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman and EPA Administrator Christine Whitman in mid-December. The rule requires all "Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations" – large operations including those with 1,00 or more cattle and 700 dairy cows – to obtain pollution discharge permits. These operators have pollution discharge allocations. A list detailing the numbers of other types of livestock needed to require a permit appears on page 2 of this publication.

USDA estimates that this rule could affect as many as 15,500 operations nationwide.

In Utah the number is far less, according to George Hopkin, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food environmental quality chief. Nearly 3,000 operations have been or will soon be assessed to see if they require a permit. As of January 9, 2003, only 51 of the 1,656 operations assessed so far definitely require a permit.

Utah started assessing livestock operations more than a year and a half ago. There are still about 1,000 operations to assess. The several agencies and agricultural groups that started working on Utah's animal feeding operation strategy about three years ago knew that they needed to complete the Utah Strategy and start working on the assessment phase even before the national rule was completed.

"This is a tremendous number of operations for a state to assess in a short period of time, and it is only possible due to a unique partnership between agencies and the agriculture industry," said Don Ostler, director, Utah Division of Water Quality.

As a result of this cooperative effort, Utah livestock producers are far ahead of the game in complying with the new federal rule.

The first phase of the Utah approach is to assess all the livestock operations in the state to determine their status. The assessment phase is scheduled to be complete by April 2003. Those needing a permit must also complete a Comprehensive nutrient Management Plan. The operations not requiring a permit are encouraged to complete a nutrient plan and undertake voluntary management measures.

One thing that makes Utah's plan stand out is the way it treats those livestock operations that have fewer than 1,000 animal units, but that have runoff problems. Under the rule, operations of any size that discharge into a live body of water must be permitted. In Utah, however, those

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## Is This California?

### No--But Where's the Snow?

Temperatures soared to the low 60s by the end of January in Salt Lake City. Statewide snowpack had dwindled to about 55-60 percent of normal. Despite a few February storms, the drought persists. This golf course near the Salt Lake International Airport was one of many throughout the state that offered a rare opportunity this year for local golfers to golf in Utah in January. Many courses were open nearly every day of January.

## Phase II Regs. to Take Effect

March 10, 2003 is quickly approaching.

That's the day that about 80 communities in Utah have to have their stormwater management plans and permit applications in to EPA.

At a recent meeting of the Utah Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society, a stormwater expert from the Utah Department of Environmental Quality and representatives from several communities in Utah County (about 40 miles south of Salt Lake City) discussed the deadline and what it means for the municipalities and counties involved.

The March deadline is no surprised to those affected by the Phase II regulations. All that is due on March 10th is the application and six-point stormwater management plan required by the Clean Water Act.

Some communities, such as Orem City, are well ahead of the game. They have completed their plan and have been actively working toward implementing it for some time. In fact, Orem and other municipalities have already established taxing authority to help fund stormwater infrastructure improvements and public outreach and public involvement efforts. Other communities are still working on their applications and plans.

Under Phase I of the stormwater regulations, medium and large munici-

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## Highlights

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smaller operations are given time to develop a management plan and voluntarily complete projects to control runoff. If an operation controls runoff within the allotted time no permit is issued.

"That's what sets Utah apart," said Larry Lewis, spokesman, Utah Department of Agriculture and Food. "We first worked voluntarily with some incentives, rather than fines and penalties, to get the job done. We're known throughout the country for this approach, and now the EPA is encouraging states nationwide to do the same."

As farmers and ranchers transition into the implementation phase, state and federal grant money has been used to help complete projects. In 2001, the Utah Legislature authorized $340,000 in manure management grants. The state also received $125,000 from the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Service. Because Utah is so far along in the process, it should have no trouble meeting the EPA's 2006 deadline for compliance.

# EPA Declares March Nonpoint Source month

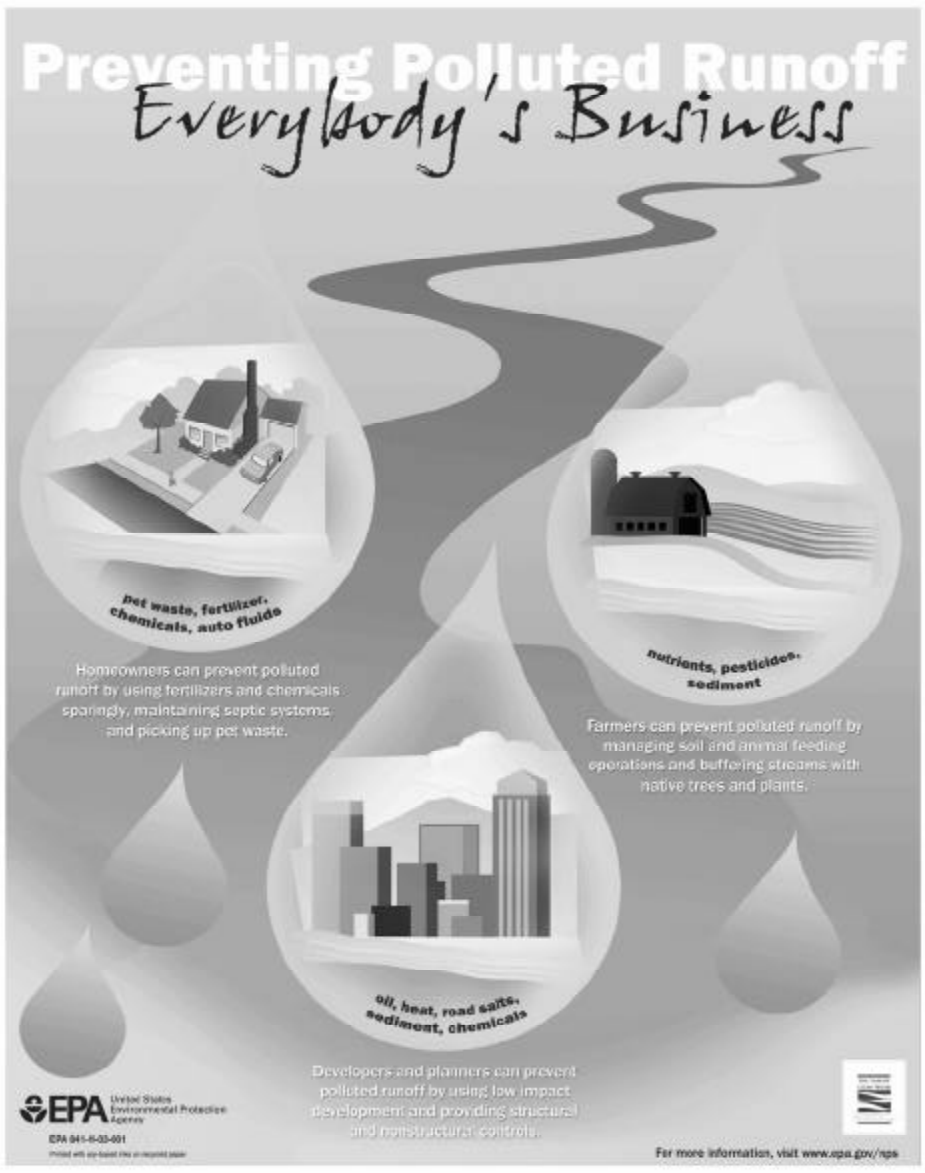
As part of the Year of Clean Water celebration, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has officially declared March 2003 as Nonpoint Source (NPS) Month.

As part of the observance, EPA has created posters, bookmarks, flyers and other materials designed to raise awareness about NPS pollution.

For more information about NPS month or to order materials go online to the EPA web site. http://www.epa.gov/water/yearofcleanwater/month.html.

NPS Month is part of the Year of Clean Water celebration that was originally developed to commemorate the 30th anniversary. EPA is recognizing several water quality topics throughout the year. April is Stormwater Month.

Other NPS outreach materials from EPA are available on line at: www.epa.gov/nps.




**"Stormwater" continued from page 1**

palities, 10 categories of industry and large construction sites (5 acres or more). Medium municipalities are those with a population of 100,000 - 249,999. Large municipalities have a population of 500,000 or greater.

Phase II now includes additional industrial categories, small construction sites (1 acre or greater) and small MS4s. In practical terms, operators of MS4s can include municipalities and local sewer districts, state and federal departments of transportation, universities, hospitals, military bases, and correctional facilities.

EPA defines a regulated small MS4 as "any small MS4 located in an 'urbanized' area (UA), as defined by the Bureau of Census, or located outside a UA and brought into the program by the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permitting authority."

Under Phase II of the stormwater regulations, every regulated small MS4 must:

- Submit an application of Notice of Intent by March 10,2003.
- Develop a stormwater management plan that includes six Minimum Control Measures
- Develop a means of evaluation and assessment of reporting
- Keep records.

The six minimum control measures are:

- Public education and outreach on stormwatrer impacts

Public Involvement and participation

- Illicit discharge detection and elimination
- Construction site runoff control
- Post-construction stormwater management in new development and redevelopment
- Pollution prevention and good housekeeping for municipal operations.

While some communities, such as Orem, have been implementing their plans for some time, residents in many communities throughout the state will notice changes in the coming months. Those changes may include stormwater fees and increase public outreach designed to raise awareness about stormwater pollution and change pollution-causing behavior.

**Utah Watershed Review**

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# National Nonpoint Source Outreach Effort Under Way

## NPS Outreach Toolbox due out soon

After nearly three years of research and behind-the-scenes work, the Outreach Workgroup of the national State-EPA Nonpoint Source (NPS) initiative is ready to release the first phase of the NPS Outreach Toolbox.

The outreach toolbox is designed to help local watershed groups, municipalities, soil conservation districts, rural water companies and others develop and implement their own successful water quality outreach campaigns.

The first phase of the toolbox, due out by June, is a teaching guide and companion video.

Getting in Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns, contains more than 90 pages of instruction, examples and interactive work sheets that take groups through a six-step process of developing and implementing an outreach campaign.

The six step process includes developing:

- Goals
- Target Audience
- Messages
- Format
- Distribution
- Evaluation

The companion video includes a short overview of the steps followed by four case studies from around the country that show the steps in use.

The video and guide are free and available through the consulting firm Tetra Tech. Please refer to the announcement and order form on this page.

Eventually the guide book will also be available on the EPA web page, www.epa.gov/owow/nps/outreach.html.

Phase II of the toolbox, a CD-ROM of existing materials related to personal stewardship activities around the home will be available near the end of 2003. CDs with existing materials related to other NPS categories will soon follow.

The third phase, newly produced materials for each major NPS category will be released incrementally. There is no word yet when Phase III will start to be released.

# Utah, Others Still Struggle With Drought

By Jack Wilbur
*Utah Watershed Review* editor

The drought appears to be over in the mid-Atlantic region of the country where they were digging out from a 50-year-magnitude snow storm in mid-February and bracing for warmer temperatures and rain that would surely bring flooding.

In the Pacific Northwest, my sister, and many other Seattle-area residents have seen some much rain this winter that they face a spring of battling moss where lawn used to be.

The Drought in much of California seems to be easing after mid-February rains brought so much water so fast that flooding and mud slides were the big concerns.

Yet, in the Mountain West we remain high and dry.

According the a recent hydrologic outlook summary from the Salt Lake City office of the National Weather Service, conditions went from bad to worse in January.

"January 2003 was a month that produced much above average temperatures and little precipitation," states the report. "As a result...most low elevation snowpacks saw an early melt, depleting much of the volume."

The report goes on to say that record snowfall is needed throughout Utah during February and March for the snow season to end at near average levels.

That would be enough of a disconcerting thought without an ongoing drought. But this is the fifth year of drought. The outlook for the spring and summer seasons from the National Weather Service is for slight improvement at best.

As of mid-February, snowpack levels in much of Utah were at about 55-65 percent of normal. The Virgin River drainage in Southwest Utah was running at about 40 percent of normal.

One positive note is that soil moisture conditions are pretty good in many areas of the state. The more moisture there is in the soil at the beginning of the snowmelt season, the more runoff will make it to streams, rivers and reservoirs.

Back to the bad news. Reservoir storage in 41 major reservoirs across the state is at 47 percent of capacity, down 656,000 acre feet from last year. This is a 12 percent loss from last year's surface water stores.

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) snow survey looks at two important snow-related numbers: total precipitation and snow water equivalent. The light, dry, powdery snow Utah is known for is great for skiing but not so great for water storage and groundwater recharge. This year the snow water equivalent number is running lower than the total precipitation, which just make matters worse.

According to the most recent NRCS snow survey (February 18, 2003), the statewide snowpack average for total precipitation is 69 percent. However, the statewide average for snow water equivalent is 61 percent.

While the Virgin River drainage continues to be hardest hit, there is no clear "north-south" division like there is many years.

The Bear River drainage in Northern Utah, for example is running 62 percent of normal for snow water equivalent. Total precipitation is currently at 72 percent of normal.

Just to the south in the Weber-Ogden Rivers watershed, the snow water equivalent is 61 percent and the total precipitation is 66 percent of normal.

The Provo River-Utah Lake-Jordan River area, which has the largest population, has one of the lower snow water equivalent percentages in the state at 54 percent of normal. The total precipitation number is somewhat better at 65 percent.

The Green River drainage in the east-central part of the state is one of the bright spots. The Snow equivalent number is 71 percent of normal and the total precipitation is 80 percent of normal.

The Price-San Rafael watersheds are also doing better than the state average. The snow water equivalent is 70 percent and the total precipitation is 78 percent of normal.

The southeastern corner of Utah, near the Four Corners area is another hard-hit area, The basin-wide totals are 60 percent of average for snow water equivalent and 62 percent of normal for total precipitation.

But, as mentioned before, the St. George area, the Virgin River drainage is the hardest hit of all. Despite a two-day rain in St. George in February that produced more than .5 inches of water, the snow water equivalent in the snowpack in the mountains above St. George sits at 40 percent of average.

For more information about Utah's snowpack. Log onto the NRCS web site: www.ut.nrcs.gov. The Salt lake City National Weather Service office web site is: www.wrh.noaa.gov/saltlake/.

## Back to Winter, for A While

*The photo on the front page of this publication was taken in Salt Lake City on January 31, 2003, when the temperature was 63 degrees. Two days later Salt Lake City residents woke up to pictures like this. The temperature had dropped about 25 degrees, and 2-4 inches of snow had fallen at the valley floor. The Northern Utah mountains received 8-12 inches of snow. The weekend blast of winter delighted skiers, who flocked to the slopes, but the moisture barely made a dent in snowpack totals. The drought continues.*